



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Skid Row Overdose Deaths Soar: Impacting Housed and Unhoused Residents

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – In anticipation of International Overdose Awareness Day, a Coalition of service providers, academics and activists will hold a press conference to discuss Skid Row specific overdose data provided by the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner for 2022. Overdoses in Skid Row and the surrounding area surged dramatically from 13 in 2017 to 148 in 2022, a whopping 1,038% increase. Approximately half of the fatal overdoses in 2022 occurred in residential units. The data reveals alarming trends, notably the disproportionate impact on Black residents, especially Black women experiencing significantly higher mortality rates. The data was analyzed by Dr. Cheryl Grills, CEO of The Imoyase Group, Inc., and professor of psychology at Loyola Marymount University.

The Coalition is concerned about the community's limited access to overdose data and the absence of a coordinated response to curb the escalating death toll, despite major City and County investments to support people experiencing homelessness.

Skid Row resident Michael Rimson states:

"People are not taking this seriously ... several people I know have recently died."

The group is advocating for several key measures to combat the overdose crisis in Skid Row. They stress the importance of having access to naloxone, a life-saving opioid reversal medication, in all Skid Row hotels. Additionally, the expansion in available drug treatment beds. Finally, they are advocating for a crisis response strategy that incorporates regular wellness checks and a broader public awareness about the overdose issue.

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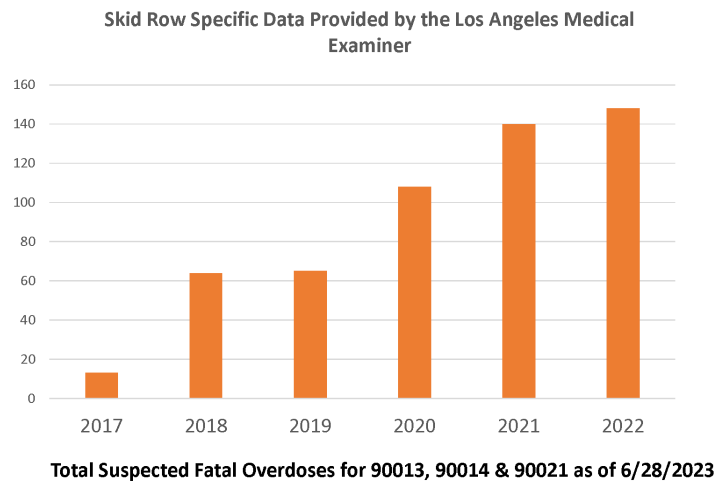
On August 30 at 9:30 a.m., the Coalition will hold a press conference organized by United Coalition East Prevention Project and the LA Harm Reduction Network to bring attention to these needless deaths and propose strategies for reducing overdoses.

Press Conference Details:

Location: Corner of 5th and Spring

Time: 9:30 AM

Date: August 30th, 2023



According to the County of Los Angeles Public Health portal, www.recoverla.org, Skid Row has no withdrawal management (detox beds) and only one residential treatment facility. The skyrocketing number of overdoses in the community demands an urgent response and the group is advocating for the following policy demands:

- **Naloxone availability in all Skid Row hotels.**
- **Increased treatment beds in the Skid Row community.**
- **Mandate a Crisis Response Plan for all Skid Row buildings.**

Additional asks:

- Make naloxone available at public overdose-prone spaces (i.e., parks, public toilets).
- Make information about the rise in overdose deaths, related risks, and prevention strategies available.
- Strengthen tenant and unhoused community resilience against overdoses by using strategies like the buddy system, floor captains, wellness checks, and support groups.

United East Coalition Prevention Project (UCEPP) is a program of Social Model Recovery Systems, Inc., a private non-profit human services organization. UCEPP' mission is to engage Skid Row's most vulnerable populations to challenge the systemic conditions and social disparities that threaten a healthy environment. The LA Harm Reduction Network is a community-based organization with a focus on improving and expanding access to addiction treatment in Los Angeles.

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